time till it is gradually phased out, after its Total Technical Life is fully exploited.

The Air Force has already re-examined the safety and strike capability of the MIG force in consultation with the Original Equipment Manufacturers and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. A total of 125 MIG-21 Bis aircraft have been planned to be upgraded. The indigenised production of MIG-21 Bis aircraft continued till 1989. Taking average life of 35 years, the majority of these aircraft have got considerable residual life left. All technical problems as experienced during the exploitation of this fleet have been addressed. MIG-21 Bis Upgraded thus would be a contemporary fighter comparable with the best in its class. The other Air Forces of the world have also been flying aircraft of similar vintage.

Proposal for non-lapsable defence fund

5126. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry has sent a proposal to the Finance Ministry for a two year non-lapsing defence fund; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) A proposal has been forwarded to Ministry of Finance to evolve a mechanism to allow carry forward of unused amount of one financial year, under the Capital outlay, to the next financial year.

AN-32 Aircraft hit by Pak Fire

5127. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an Air Force AN-32 transport aircraft was hit when Pakistani forces opened fire in Kargil sector in the last week of February, 2002;

(b) whether Government have conducted an enquiry into this incident;

(c) if so, the conclusions of the enquiry;

(d) whether India has lodged any protest to Pakistan in this regard; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Court of Inquiry was ordered and based on the findings of the court of Inquiry suitable administrative action has already been taken.

(d) and (e) So far India has not lodged any protest in this case.

Shelling by Pakistani troops in Jammu and Rajouri districts

5128. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that thirty-three forward Indian posts along the International Border and Line of Control were targeted by Pakistani troops on March 27, 2002 who resorted to firing and shelling in Jammu and Rajouri districts;

(b) if so, what were the total loss and damage of properties on the Indian side;

(c) the reasons for Pakistani firing and shelling of these posts; and

(d) what action has been taken by India against shelling of Pakistani troops on these borders?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The exchange of fire between Pakistan and Indian troops deployed along the Line of Control and International Border of Jammu & Kashmir is a regular phenomenon. Pakistan troops resort to firing to abet infiltration and inflict casualties on Indian troops.